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psychic crystals" of her soul nor her wish that she were "God in a colored globe" moves one to more than casual interest. Perhaps this is partly because one looks for sensuous instead of spiritual beauties in a kaleidoscope.

Illustrations and decorations usually spoil a book of poems. In this case the decorations, done by Curtis Moffatt, the author's husband, have the same quality as the verses and add to their flavor.

Nelson Antrim Crawford

THE PREMATURITY OF IMMATURITY

Hidden Path, by Ned Hungerford. Privately printed.

It is hard to call this the poetry of a young man. There is feeling and experience in it; it is immature not in knowledge of life but in the mechanics of expression, in the practice of poetic craftsmanship. Where other poets can amble and even trip gaily and gracefully, in well trodden and frequented ways, Mr. Hungerford plods lonely and stumbling. He presents almost pathetically the figure of a man desperately concerned with self-expression, not as a necessity born with him but out of some troubling circumstance. I feel that things are maddeningly dull for Mr. Hungerford, wherever he is; that he has an insuppressible desire to find a kinder environment.

That is why opening his book gave me the thrill that a man might feel if he picked up a stray message from a lost man—say, something in a bottle, or between the halves of a fruit. There is a distracting personal interest in

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every poem that makes its status as poetry unimportant. And the regrettable element in the matter is that the author deliberately aims to achieve this effect. He writes in his introductory poem:

Reader . . .
That these poems are now in your hands
Is proof that they are meant for you.
Whatever your race, color, or creed, you are brother
To him who wrote them,
And to him who placed them in your hands.

It is the old plea of the beginner not sure of his audience, the old futile defiance of criticism, futile because of its unconscious confession of a lack of technique. Somewhere else in the book, he makes the stock challenge:

O ready condemners,
Isn't it just possible
You and I are thinking of something
Entirely different?

The persistent illusion of being misunderstood (when one is merely ignored), the illusion that others in his plight may take heart from his avowals, is the inspiration of a good many of these poems. Throughout, the reader is left with the consciousness of listening to a muddled eager man, who can hardly resist the temptation to buttonhole his few auditors. The very titles of this and a previous book—*Hidden Path, Uncertain Trail*—give Mr. Hungerford's own estimate of his literary journey.

If Ned Hungerford is comparatively young, he may find out eventually whither he is bound, in which case he

The Prematurity of Immaturity

will regret publishing this misgiven itinerary. If he is not a young man and is bogged fast in bewildering cross-roads, the book will be one more of the crowded minor fatalities on the literary front. From any standpoint it is premature; it may have satisfied momentarily a craving to appear in print, but already it must have obliterated that satisfaction by coming back in all its gruesome immaturity to haunt its author. It would have been passed over in silence; but as it is typical of many books of verse sent out in quest of reviews, the above remarks may serve as a hint to other self-deceived, and often embittered, would-be poets.

Isidor Schneider

CORRESPONDENCE

THE ALLIED ARTS AGAIN

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Dear Editor: It was with great interest that I read in *POETRY* for October, your comments upon my *Musical America* article. I am glad to have the opportunity and the invitation to express an opinion I have long held.

I believe we should have something in the nature of a National Committee for the Protection of the Native Lyric from the Distortions Practised by Incompetent Composers. Poets, when asked for permission to make "settings" of their words, often grant it graciously and trust to luck. What a writer ought to do is to tell the